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SUBJECT: VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE IN SPAIN

11. Summary: Volunteer activity is increasingly common in Spain, although there are lingering historic, social and cultural factors that affect the ability/willingness of individuals to engage in or initiate activities. This report provides an overview of Spanish volunteerism and charitable activity. It outlines Spanish government support for volunteerism and identifies key ministries involved in program support. A review of the political parties, private sector, education system, press, and non-governmental organizations highlights the broad range of civil society activism. End Summary.

12. Volunteer activity is increasingly common in Spain, although there are lingering historic, social and cultural factors in play that affect the ability/willingness of individuals to engage in or initiate activities. Community service and social assistance are closely-linked and typically regarded as a government responsibility in Spain. Instead of organizing discreet volunteer activities to "fill a perceived gap", many Spaniards might lobby for the government or a NGO to provide a needed social service, believing that it would also create a job opportunity as well. While the Church may not be deemed primarily responsible for charitable initiatives, its role is often assumed, especially given the Catholic Church's historically prominent role in Spanish society. Also, Spanish law requires financial institutions to set aside a percentage of profits to fund social welfare institutions, thereby reducing the inclination of private citizens to devote their leisure hours to volunteerism. Some social commentators attribute the lack of widespread volunteerism to the long-term effects of the Spanish Civil War. Many people participated in civic action groups affiliated with political parties during the 1920s and 30s, only to face severe repression as territories and allegiances shifted during the war years. During the Franco dictatorship, there were similar disincentives for citizens to initiate volunteer activity, outside of officially sanctioned programs by the central government or the predominant Catholic Church. Reliance on government assistance combined with cultural norms results in a disinclination toward regular volunteer activity. Other factors include common strong family ties whereby people have obligations with their parents and grandparents during weekends and other free time that might otherwise be devoted to volunteer activity. Similarly, many people remain close to their place of birth as they enter the work force. Therefore, they may not seek out volunteer opportunities as a way of entering a new community, making new friends or acquiring new skills.

13. Spaniards understand the concept and value of volunteerism and almost everybody knows somebody who has volunteered. However, many say that they do not volunteer on a regular, formal basis. For example, unlike in the U.S. and other European countries, for Spaniards entering the job market, volunteer work is not a valued addition to one's resume when seeking employment. The typical volunteer profile generally consists of youth/university students interested in community activism, members of a religious community motivated by charitable works, or wealthy patrons subsidizing charitable organizations with financial contributions.

¶4. A study by Universidad de Zaragoza professors claims that 17.6 percent of the citizenry has participated in volunteerism in Spain and that one in four employed Spaniards work in the civil society or NGO sector, as opposed to the private or public sectors. However, this statistic is easily misinterpreted -- one in six people volunteering once in his/her life does not necessarily signify a strong volunteer environment in Spain. The survey reflects the occasional participation of Spaniards in community service activities. Volunteerism takes many forms. For example, Spain has several programs in which families bring disadvantaged youth or refugee children (from Western Sahara, Eastern Europe, Palestine, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.) to live in their homes for 6-8 weeks each summer. Umbrella organizations organizing the homestays include: Paz Ahora, Movimiento Contra La Intolerancia, Sunrise Africa, and Infancia Solidaria.

¶5. While most Spaniards do not actively volunteer, there are opportunities available. The number of NGOs has increased exponentially since the 1980s and since the 1990s the Spanish government has institutionalized support for volunteerism. In 1980 there were 10 registered NGOs operating in Spain. According to a recent article published by Europa Press, there are currently 400 NGOs registered in Spain and one in four Spanish citizens work in civil society. There is no doubt that volunteerism is gradually increasing in Spain, as evidenced by official government support for civil society action and the wide range of NGOs soliciting volunteers, however, many groups rely on paid staff to carry out their activities.

Volunteerism Embraced by Spanish Law

¶6. Spain passed a Volunteerism Law in January 1996. The Volunteerism Law acknowledges that social initiatives and civic participation promote greater solidarity and a higher quality of life and guarantees that Spanish citizens have the legal right to volunteer for whichever causes they see fit. Secondly, it recognizes the obligation of the State to work to improve the efficiency of volunteerism in Spain.

National Plans for Volunteerism

¶7. There have been three "plans" for Volunteerism in Spain, to prioritize and align volunteerism strategies. The first plan lasted from 1997-2000 and the second from 2001-2004. The third and most current plan for 2005-2009 seeks to improve the citizen solidarity and strengthen social action in Spain. The National Plan is based on inputs from public administrations both at the autonomous and local levels, NGOs, universities, labor unions and the business community. The plan presents a cross-sector consensus on social welfare policies; it outlines coordination strategies, designates areas that need attention and assistance and establishes goals, indicators and program evaluations.

Spanish Government Entities Support Volunteerism

¶8. The Ministry of Labor and Immigration:
The primary Spanish government ministry that oversees and promotes domestic volunteerism in Spain is the Ministry of Labor and Immigration. It oversees and funds "La Plataforma del Voluntariado de España" (PVE). This NGO (known as an ONG in Spain) created in 1986 coordinates and promotes volunteerism and social action in Spain. PVE is comprised of 77 volunteer organizations representing more than 800,000 volunteers throughout Spain. It also represents Spain at the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE), which claims to be the only international organization that exists to solely promote and support volunteerism among all people. The PVE and the Labor Ministry co-manage Spain's annual National Volunteerism that brings together people from all over Spain including youth, NGOs and government ministries to discuss enhancing volunteerism in Spain. The Ministry of Health and Social Policy also plays a role in the National Volunteerism Congress, and

coordinates Spain's State Plans for Volunteerism.

¶9. The Ministry of Health and Social Policy:

The Health Ministry manages the National Council of Social Action NGOs (a consultative body, comprised of some of the country's largest NGOs) whose aim is to encourage NGO participation and to assist Spain's vulnerable populations. The Council contains member groups spanning issues from Social Inclusion and Employment to Volunteerism to Gender and Equality.

¶10. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation:

Spain's volunteer efforts in the international arena are funded within the Foreign Affairs Ministry by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), which focuses on the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and combats global poverty. It works with a variety of development-focused NGOs throughout the world utilizing volunteer services. AECID also subsidizes Spain-based development NGOs with public funds totaling almost 187 million euros in 2009.

Political Parties Support Civic Action Rather Than Specific Volunteer Programs

¶11. Spain's two major political parties encourage civic action as part of their social development objectives. While each party supports various organizations, the parties themselves do not actively promote volunteerism. Within the governing Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE), a "Social Movements Secretariat" promotes volunteerism in several different organizations including the Development NGO Coordinator (CONGD) and Solidarity International, both which focus on international issues such as expanding human rights and combating poverty in underdeveloped nations. Domestically, the PSOE encourages young people to take an active role in the Jaime Vera School, a national foundation aimed at reshaping today's youth and encouraging PSOE affiliation, and another organization promoting rights of the PSOE's Lesbians, Gays, Transsexual or Bisexual (LGTB) members.

¶12. The opposition People's Party (PP), supports its affiliate think tank, the Foundation for Analysis and Social Studies, which is committed to the political ideas and activities of the reformist center-right. The PP also funds the Humanism and Democracy Foundation, which addresses international development issues and promotes liberty, democracy and tolerance. Another organization in which the PP encourages civic participation is Women In Equality, which promotes the advancement and participation of women across all aspects of society.

FINANCIAL SECTOR SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE THROUGH SOLIDARITY FUNDS

¶13. Spanish law requires financial institutions to give a percentage of their profits to social causes through "solidarity funds". These funds typically take the form of foundations created and controlled by the banks. In 2007, savings banks donated more than 1.8 billion euros to NGO activities, up from 660 million euros in 2006. For example, Bank Santander's foundation is a cultural organization to increase accessibility of arts. It organizes exhibits, hosts conferences and seminars, promotes classical music and supports education and research programs, among other things. Banesto's foundation works with Microsoft Iberca to help smaller businesses to apply new technologies and approve their efficiency, capacity and competitiveness through an online media portal named Escuela Banespyme. The BBVA Foundation promotes scientific training and research, specifically in the areas of Environment, Biomedicine and Health, Economy and Society, Basic Sciences and Technology, and Arts and Humanities. It funds research, educational seminars, training and grants. Another bank, Caja Madrid, sponsors the PVE and Ministry of Labor's social development agenda. Additionally, Caja Madrid's Foundation promotes knowledge and cultural development in Spain. It also has a social work branch that creates and helps disabled and socially excluded people find employment and live stable, productive lives. Caja Madrid claims responsibility for creating 13,000 jobs for these populations.

Private Sector Beginning to Focus On Corporate Volunteerism

¶14. Aside from the legally required financial institution foundations, corporate community activism/volunteerism is not widespread in Spain. Just as many U.S. companies encourage and often require staff to participate in volunteer projects, a small number of American firms operating in Spain also promote corporate volunteerism here. CitiBank Spain funds Junior Achievement promoting financial education for at-risk youth. In 2007, 30 percent of CitiBank Spain employees participated in volunteer activities, 67 employees taught in schools in disadvantaged areas of Madrid, Barcelona, Seville Valencia and Huelva and the firm estimates that more than 1,000 people benefitted from the work of CitiSpain's 400 volunteers. Another U.S. company, Canon, supports Barcelona-based Global Humanitaria, an NGO that works in Latin America, Africa and Asia to address children's education, health, socioeconomic development and human rights. One Spanish enterprise of great social significance is the Corporacion Empresarial ONCE (CEOSA), whose goal is to make a profit while rendering social services and creating jobs for the disabled. Its non-profit side, ONCE, assists the blind in Spain by teaching orientation and mobility techniques as well as helping treat the psychosocial effects that going blind can cause. In 2003, the profit center, CEOSA, employed almost 1,500 disabled people - primarily through a very popular lottery program that ONCE operates throughout Spain.

Volunteerism and the Education System

¶15. Most Catholic high schools, and some private secondary schools, require a community service component. Additionally, most universities have a volunteer office to link students with opportunities. The following is a partial list of universities that offer volunteerism opportunities: Extremadura, Pablo de Olavide de Seville, Autonoma de Madrid, Santiago de Compostela, Zaragoza, Murcia, Salamanca, Tenerife, Deusto, Alcala, Malaga, Ianza Instituto Internacional Juan Pablo II, Valladolid, Cantabria, Cdiz, Rey Juan Carlos, Europea de Madrid, Granda, Seville, Almera, Catolica de Valencia San Vicente Martir, Francisco de Vitoria, Catolica de Murcia, Huelva, Burgos, Navarra, Cataluna and Vigo. In Andaluca, all universities in the region participate in a joint volunteer program, known as Programa Andaluz de Voluntariado Universitario that focuses on natural resource conservation and other environmental issues.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) Utilize Volunteers

¶16. The largest NGOs in Spain are Cruz Roja Espanola with 750,000 members (483 million euro budget), Medicos sin Fronteras with 370,000 members and Intermon-Oxfam with 257,000. Caritas, affiliated with the Catholic Church, counts 65,000 volunteers and has a 185 million euro budget. Other influential NGOs that offer a variety of social services include El Instituto de Trabajo Social y de Servicios Sociales (INTRESS), the Red Espaola de Desarrollo Rural (REDR) and Spain's branch of the European Anti Poverty Network - EAPN (Red Europea de Lucha contra la Pobreza y la Exclucion Social). In addition, many of the same NGOs that are powerful in the U.S. are also influential in Spain. These included organizations like the Salvation Army, the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, Greenpeace and World Vision. The following website contains a comprehensive list of Spain's NGOs and links to their websites: [http://ong.consumer.es/alfabeticamente/?PARAM\[searchFromResult\]=0](http://ong.consumer.es/alfabeticamente/?PARAM[searchFromResult]=0). Other internet listings of volunteer opportunities are www.microvoluntarios.org and www.idealistas.org.

Catholic Church's Significant Volunteer Profile

¶17. The Catholic Church's social work in Spain is primarily through Caritas, its official social and charitable arm. Caritas is

an international charitable organization with a presence in 198 countries. Its official goal is to inform, support and raise awareness of poverty, its causes and consequences and offer opportunities for people to participate to induce change. The Spanish Caritas network is comprised of 5,000 Caritas parishes, 68 Dioceses and their corresponding regional and autonomous parts. In Spain, Caritas has 65,000 active volunteers, which Caritas claims to be 90 percent of Spain's active volunteer pool. Its 185 million euro budget makes it one of the wealthiest NGOs in Spain. Caritas' activities are wide ranging; volunteers work with the homeless, drug dependents, prison populations and ex-convicts, the elderly, women, immigrants, youth, the disabled and others. It also has an analytical branch, the Fundacisn para el Fomento de Estudios Sociales y de Sociologa Avanzada (FOESSA), which examines social statistics in Spain and also maintains documentation of its activities.

SPANISH PRESS ACTIVELY PROMOTES VOLUNTEERISM

¶18. The Spanish press actively promotes volunteerism. At regular intervals, the major newspapers run articles, typically in weekend "lifestyle" supplements or magazines geared toward women, about the importance of volunteerism. These press articles are accompanied by listing of volunteer opportunities with contact information.

Embassy Community Charitable Contributions and Volunteerism

¶19. The U.S. Embassy in Madrid has many connections with the volunteer sector in Spain. Students in the International Baccalaureate Program at The American School, attended by many children of Embassy staff, are required to participate in community service activities as part of their curriculum. This year the students raised over 4,000 euros for Operation Smile. The American Women's Club in Madrid holds an annual fundraiser to support its volunteer activities. The British Ladies Association's charity shop is staffed by volunteers who raise money for local charities. The Diplomatic Women's Association raises charitable funds via its annual October Bazaar; this year, almost 50 embassies participated. Our Embassy's American Employee Association donates money to worthy causes. This year Embassy fundraising supported the Centro de Asistencia a Vctimas de Agresiones Sexuales (CAVAS), another organization, SAF, as well as the above mentioned Diplomatic Women's Association. CAVAS has a close relationship with the Embassy as it often works with the Consular Section and Fraud Prevention Unit of the Embassy. The Embassy Marines support the U.S. program, Toys for Tots, each Christmas and donate items to a local orphanage --the 2008 recipient was Hogar Nuestra Senora de los Desamparados.

¶20. Individuals within the Embassy community, officers and family members, volunteer with local faith-based organizations or their children's schools. Many parents volunteer with sporting or scouting programs. Additionally, Embassy family members and summer interns have volunteered their time supporting diplomatic outreach activities in the U.S. interest, including the Public Affairs Section's speaker program at primary and secondary schools, and youth activities at cultural events.

¶21. A sample of some volunteer organizations in Madrid includes:

Cruz Roja - www.cruzrojamadrid.org

Accion Familiar - www.accionfamiliar.org

Rescate - www.ongrescate.org

Manos Unidos - www.manosunidos.org

Alzheimers - www.fundacionalzheimeresp.org

Save the Children - www.savethechildren.es

Intermon Oxfam - www.intermonoxfam.org

Caritas - www.caritas.org

Asociacion Infantil de Oncologia de Madrid - +34 91 504 0998

Comision Espanola de Ayuda al Refugiado - www.cear.es

Solidarios para el desarrollo - www.solidarios.org

Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones de Apoyo al Pueblo Saharaui -
+34 91 531 7604

Fundacion Deporte y Desafio -www.deporteydesafio.com

Banco de Alimentos - www.bancdelsaliments.org

Amigos de los Mayores - www.amigosdelosmayores.org

Global Nature Fundacion - fundacionglobalnature.org

Asociacion Nacional de los Animales - www.anaaweb.org

Apoyo Positivo (HIV/AIDS Support) - www.apoyopositivo.org

Asociacion Contra la Anorexia y Bulimia - www.acab.org

Confederacion Espanola de Agrupaciones de Familiares y Personas con
Enfermedad Mental - www.feafes.com

Asociacion de Ayuda a Familias de Drogodependientes - www.adafad.org

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